

IKE RAPPED FOR U-2 ROLE

Ex-Aide Says Whole Affair
Was Badly Mishandled

Washington, July 26 (AP)—An Eisenhower Administration press official says President Dwight Eisenhower's public assumption of responsibility for the U-2 spy flights destroyed one of the greatest opportunities in America's diplomatic history.

Andrew Berding, an Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs during the final four years of the Eisenhower Administration, severely criticizes United States handling of the May, 1960, U-2 incident in a new book, "Foreign Affairs and You."

Berding's main premise is that by shouldering responsibility for the spy flights over Russia, Eisenhower lost the grand prize of a visit to the Soviet Union.

Seen As Turning Point

Eisenhower, Berding said, would have been able to conduct a triumphal tour as combination United States President and war hero that no other President could do in the foreseeable future.

Picturing this as a disastrous turning point in Eisenhower era foreign relations, Berding suggests that if Eisenhower had kept away from the U-2 affair—as governments traditionally do when their spies are caught—the President also could have completed his trip to Japan; allies would not have raised serious questions about America's wisdom, and Republican Richard M. Nixon might have won the 1960 Presidential campaign in which United States leadership was an issue.

"Personal Tragedy"

In a chapter entitled "Tragedy at the Top," Berding says advice to Eisenhower to assume U-2 responsibility came from a combination of State Department and White House aides. He said press handling of the incident was "a disaster" partly because his office was not consulted.

"All things considered," Berding said, "I believe President Eisenhower's decision to shoulder

responsibility for the U-2 was one of the greatest mistakes in the diplomatic history of the United States.

A personal tragedy resulted for President Eisenhower and threw a dark shadow over the remaining months of his Administration.

In another portion of the 264-page book, Berding writes of the ill-fated "United States-sponsored invasion of Cuba by Cuban refugees in 1961" and calls it "a major disaster for us in world opinion." He adds:

"President Kennedy's honest public recognition of the mistake and his personal acceptance of blame soothed some of its sharper edges."

Other Points

Berding, an Associated Press diplomatic correspondent before starting a career as a Government officer in 1947, made these observations about press relations:

1. The stricter a secrecy classification is on a document, the more likely it is to leak out. This is because the top secrecy label attracts attention.

2. Rigid secrecy by the United States Government in dealing with

the Russians hands the Reds "the advantage of putting out their distorted version (at) their own choosing."

3. "In handling public relations during foreign ministers conferences with the Russians I sometimes experienced more difficulty with information slipped out by one or another of our allies than with that pushed out by the Soviets."

"Semi-Convulsions"

4. Sometimes United States diplomats would "go into semi-convulsions and launch 'frantic security investigations of junior officers and clerical employees' when a 'leak' actually came from a top official or was a clever reporter's piecing together of different bits of information."

5. Although Mr. Kennedy criticized United States press reporting of pre-Cuban invasion activity, such activities are bound to be published sooner or later in a democracy. "If the Government did not want the activity to come to light it should not have conducted the activity."

6. The press should exercise "some restraint... in the number of correspondents sent to cover major international events."